

Dictated on Thursday 26 July 45
Signed on Sunday 2 Sept 45

We have just returned from a tour across the whole southern part of shattered Germany, and here are the highlights.

THURSDAY - 19th July

at Paris

The trip began on the morning of 19th July at 0815 when Lt-Col Niser and I picked up our small luggage and bedding rolls at the Hotel Prince de Galles. Colonel Bicher, who was going by air later in the day and was to meet us at Russelsheim, had provided a staff car, driven very ably by Sgt. Vaughan Gunion. We were seen on the outskirts of Paris, driving along Route N3, and arrived at Verdun at 1210 where we stopped at the Transient Officers Mess for lunch. Here I met my first embarrassment when I discovered that in the haste of departure I had inadvertently left my orders in my blouse. When the sergeant at the desk asked me if I had a mess ticket, which I did not have, and then asked to see my orders, I had to appeal to Sgt. Gunion for a copy of his, since my name appeared thereon, together with his and Col. Niser's. We had a nice lunch for which I paid the sum total of 12½ francs (25 cents), plus 25 frs for a tiny glass (not more than three ounces) of vin ordinaire. I cite this as an indication of the disparity in the cost of things provided by the Army and things which you have to buy on your own at prices set by the French. The meal itself consisted of an appetizer, followed by meat and vegetables and a dessert, together with coffee - a fairly nice meal which cost only 25 cents. But the single glass of wine, paid for on my own, cost twice as much!

We crossed the border into Germany at 1500, about two miles beyond the French city of Forbach. It is very difficult to put in words my heavy feeling of sadness at the sights to be seen on these highways. The destruction of homes and buildings of all sorts in the larger cities is almost indescribable. I will try to bring back some photographs which will be more adequate than my own poor words, to indicate the extent of the destruction that war has brought to this part of the world. All along the road from time to time one comes across groups of two or three to a dozen people carrying their total belongings either on their backs or on small carts - people trying to get back to their homes, people that are known as displaced persons.* Occasionally one passes a truck filled with the personal belongings of these wanderers who sit on top of them and stare about with a more or less vacant expression. Occasionally there is a smile but most of them seem to be very sad and I saw one or two women weeping. Everywhere this is a familiar sight - displaced families on the move.

All along the route, here and there, are wrecks of German vehicles of all sorts: tanks, trucks, staff cars and so on, such sights being more frequent as one goes deeper into the heart of Germany. I was very much interested in noting the signs along the roads, and was glad to find, rather frequently, signs reading: "Mines Swept to Ditches". I imagine that it must have been rather hazardous to move along these roads before the latter

*Also referred to as
"displaced persons" and
briefly as "D-P's."

operation was completed. The multiplicity of signs at the crossroads is often very confusing - military units of all sorts listed with directions as to their location, signs put up by the French, intermingling with those put up by the British and Americans. It was very hard at times to pick out quickly the name of the next town towards which we wished to go, out of the multiplicity of directions. Code names for units and places abound.

I have mentioned the devastation seen along the main highways and especially in the cities, and yet there are people living in the shells of houses wherever sufficient of the structure is left to make the place at all "habitable". Another frequent sight to be seen is the hauling of small quantities of wood and faggots in handcarts, mostly by young children and old people. Apparently this is the only type of fuel available and people wander miles from home to pick up what they can. What the fuel situation will be when the cold weather comes is hard to imagine.

I was very much interested to note the gasoline pipelines following the road for long distances, with the remains of pumping stations encountered now and again. The bringing of gasoline from England across the Channel, then across France and into the heart of Germany was apparently one of the things that made the rapid movement of our forces possible. Miss Lucas, to whom I am dictating this report, tells me that she has seen a most interesting motion picture of the laying of these pipelines, including that part which had to be laid under water across the Channel. She tells me that this was called Operation "Flute" - Pipe Line Under The Ocean.

I should say a word or two about the countryside itself between the large cities. This looks for the most part completely untouched by the ravages of warfare, the hills beyond Kaiserlautern being particularly beautiful. The plots of wheat, rye and barley ripening, or already harvested, were visible for miles and miles over the countryside. The very well kept forests, especially in Germany, are impressive.

In general we had no difficulty in finding our way through cities, in spite of many detours necessitated by the impassability of bridges that had been blown up, but we did get lost once, losing about an hour, in looking for the Reichsautobahn after we left Ludwigshafen. We arrived at Russelsheim at 2015. This is the headquarters of one of the important installations of SID and goes under the code name "Barn". Of course if I had the job of designating code names I should have called this something like "Lepidoptera" or some such high-falutin' name rather than a simple word like "Barn", but then I suppose nobody would be able to find it let alone pronounce it! When we arrived at Russelsheim, Colonel Richer who had left Paris by plane about noon and had arrived about 1600, had already gone to Frankfurt for a visit with some old

Thursday 26 July 45

friends of his. I was sorry because I had hoped to go along with him but our delay en route was so much that he gave up waiting. We arrived too late to have a hot meal, but our hunger was satisfied by a couple of slices of Spam, bread and butter, sliced cucumber and beer, served at the Senior Officers Mess which was originally a Gasthaus. The people who operate the mess are Germans and the food is provided by the Army. It is very well cooked, as I had occasion to note later. Russelsheim was untouched by air or ground attacks.* I shall have more to say about this town in my random notes, later on in this account.

I had a very nice reunion with Lt-Col. Rubin who came to my room in the Senior Officers quarters, this being in a well-built private home which had been requisitioned when SID set up its operations in Russelsheim. Presently we were joined by Majors Goodman, Blusky and Bladassarre. Scotch was provided and we spent the evening discussing the war and the particular part played in it by Detachment "D". I found the discussion extremely interesting and I learned a good deal more from three hours' talk than I could have learned by reading reams of reports. We turned in at midnight, but I did not sleep very well because there are no homes in France or Germany, apparently, which are provided with screens, and we having had the lights on, the room was alive with tiny insects which kept buzzing around all night, got into my hair and eyebrows and in general played havoc with my night's rest. The bed in which I slept was half of a typical German twinbed affair. This consists of two three-quarter size beds set together with two separate but temporarily joined headboards and a single foot-board. The mattress consists of three sections on each twin bed and these lie laterally across the bed, a monstrous and uncomfortable arrangement quite different from our single, longitudinally disposed, mattress. If they have any box-springs or beautyrest mattresses, I have not encountered any so far. The idea of the associated twin beds is not a bad one - if you sleep alone you have plenty of room in which to thrash about; and if you sleep double there is still room for each one.

FRIDAY - 20 July

Up at 0725 and had a nice bath and a good breakfast at the mess, after which I reported in at the operations building and had a good talk with Lt. Stubbs on his work. I had a reunion with Lt-Col Allen whom I had met at SID in London in 1943.

Colonel Bicher, Lt-Col Allen and I left Russelsheim at 1145 for a place called Ebermannstadt, by car. This journey took us through the heart of Germany and we passed through the cities of Aschaffenburg, Würzburg and Nürnberg. The destruction to be seen in cities such as these should be noted by anybody who believes in war, because it can tell more about what happens in modern warfare than reams of literature. At Nürnberg we turned north through Forchheim to Ebermannstadt where we arrived at 1800. Driving up a steeply inclined, narrow and twisting

* I found later that this is not true. Another part of the town (manufacturing) was completely wrecked.

- 3 -

road to the top of a fair-sized mountain, we got to Dr. Vierling's Institute, about which I can say nothing in this report except to indicate that in a setting suggestive of an Oppenheim murder mystery, we met Lt. Tompkins and Lt. Howard from Op 200 (the latter being very well known to me) and Lt. Lyman, Signal Corps, who was in charge of the detachment taking care of the place. We had a brief supper, consisting of hot frankfurters and potatoes and coffee, with a dessert of canned peaches. We spent the evening talking and I had a most interesting discussion with Lt. Tompkins about Einstein, the theory of Relativity, extra-sensory perception, and the like. We turned in after midnight. I was glad that I had brought along the bedroll which Colonel Cook let me have, because I was able to put it on top of a regular German Army cot which had been used by a diseased or wounded German soldier, no doubt only a few days before, for this place had recently been made into a Germany Army Hospital. When Lt. Lyman's detachment arrived, the whole place was a mess, being very ill kept and no doubt full of vermin of one sort or another. Colonel Bicher had fortunately brought along some DDT powder which we sprayed liberally around and on the beds before we put the bedding rolls on top of them.

SATURDAY - 21 July

Despite the uncomfortable bed, I had a good sleep and was up at 0645. A hot breakfast was provided, consisting of whole oranges, powdered eggs, which were not at all bad, and coffee. After a tour of the premises, which we found of some interest technically, we left Dr. Vierling's place at 0820, turned east into Czechoslovakia, and on to Pilsen. This region had been taken over by the Russians but they had withdrawn some days ago and the area is now in the American Occupation Zone. We arrived at Pilsen at 1400 but did not stop to do anything more than drive through some of the central parts of the city. There had been considerable fighting in this area but the damage was not as serious as in some German cities such as Nurnberg. I forgot to say that we stopped on the road somewhere around 1100 and broke out some "C" rations. I found later that these did not agree with me too well because the meat and spaghetti had been cooked in tomato sauce and the latter does not like me too much, especially when eaten cold. Col. Allen had brought along some "liberated" wine which we had with the "C" rations.

At 1945 we arrived at a small city named Scheyern where the headquarters or installation "Bainyard" is located. We passed through the city of Regensburg which had been hit very hard by air bombardment. We crossed the Danube River somewhere along this route and it was not blue - it is only a very muddy river, and small. My notes merely record two things - first the beautiful countryside between the devastated cities, and second the terror of going along narrow roads at fairly high speed with hundreds of people afoot and on bicycles; nobody seemed to pay any attention to the traffic. Why we didn't knock down dozens of them I do not know, except that it is a tribute to the skill of Sgt. Conion.

At Scheyern is located the 116th Signal R.I. Company, and we were cordially welcomed by Lt. Brommschweig and W/O Kagis. They had "laid on" a very fine supper consisting of excellent steak and all that goes with it. After dinner we were taken around the operations buildings and "shown the works". This is a very fine installation, taken over from the Luftwaffe, and I enjoyed seeing the various things to be seen. The personal quarters occupied by this Company are also very fine indeed. After the tour we sat around and talked until long after midnight. Colonel Bicher and I enjoyed the luxury of a hot shower, this being the first shower that Colonel Bicher has had in over two years.

SUNDAY - 22 July

We were up at 0700. I did not sleep very well probably because at 0100 Lt. Brommschweig and Mr. Kagis had provided us with a "light midnight snack". When Colonel Bicher indicated that I was perpetually hungry at night, lo and behold, soon we had steak sandwiches - great big ones - with sliced raw onion. The others had coffee, but I stuck to the Scotch.

We had breakfast at 0800 and left Scheyern at 0910. We journeyed via Munich, Wasserburg, Salzburg, to Berchtesgarden, where, of course, we had to visit Hitler's mountain lair and the remains of Hitler's home. It would take too long to describe what we saw and I can merely give some of the highlights. The city of Berchtesgarden lies in a very beautiful valley in the Austrian Alps. Hitler's home and the much advertised retreat at the top of the mountain are reached by a fine paved road that winds upward for about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and I mean almost straight upward. The cost of building the road itself must have been several million dollars; traffic is all one-way, and is carefully regulated by the Army. Our convoy consisted of about 50 vehicles, mostly jeeps, our staff car being given the honour of leading the procession up. This was a very heavy responsibility for our driver and Sgt. Gunion did nobly, in first gear all the way up. The road is very narrow and in many places there is no guard wall or railing of any sort to protect one from running off the road and dropping down all of a sudden several thousand feet. When we got to the base of Hitler's "lair", we reached a parking area and everybody dismounted in order to get to the very top of the mountain. Field grade officers only are permitted to ride the elevator to the top, the rest having to walk up a steep path. The elevator is at the end of a large, extremely well constructed tunnel, 100 yards or more in length, well lighted with electric lights, and wide enough to admit two or three automobiles abreast. The entrance to the tunnel is protected by two sets of enormous bronze doors, heavily ornamented. The shaft itself is 130 meters high, which is equivalent to about a fifteen storey building. The German who operated the elevator for us also operated it when the Nazis had the place and I talked with him a bit. He gave us a little speech in his defense, saying that he was assigned to the job - the Nazis wouldn't let him get away, etc., etc. The ride up took about three minutes and when we got to the top we found ourselves in a passage way which lead to the "lair" itself. Most of the furniture was intact except that the imitation marble top of a large round table in the main room had been broken up and the debris removed.

There were no sleeping quarters in this place, only a well-furnished kitchen and the things necessary for preparing meals, and a large conference room containing an enormous rectangular table with places for 26 people. The view from the windows of this "lair" is indescribably beautiful. Some of the mountains in view had snow on them which contrasted strikingly with the bare rocks. We took pictures, of course, and my great regret was that I had not accepted the offer of Col. Harold Miller to provide me with a still and motion picture camera, together with all the film I wanted. Had I known what we were going to see I surely would have taken advantage of his offer. Colonel Bicher and Colonel Allen took a number of shots which I hope will turn out satisfactorily. We spent about half an hour looking around and then Colonel Bicher and I came down in the elevator after a fruitless search for Colonel Allen. When we got to the bottom he was not to be seen and we waited around for some ten minutes for him. While we were waiting I was examining the place pretty thoroughly and came to a steel door which was open. I went inside and heard a German talking on the telephone, saying "Alles ist Kaput". I guessed that something had gone wrong with the elevator mechanism and this accounted for Colonel Allen's non-appearance. As a matter of fact he was in the elevator, which had stuck about 2 feet above the lowermost level. The doors could not be opened until the elevator could be started again. I hate to think of what hair-raising experience he might have had if the elevator had gotten stuck for good half way up the shaft.

Besides the main large "living room" mentioned above,

Hitler's lair must have cost a great deal of money and yet we were told that since the time of its construction in 1938, Hitler had been up there only five times and the longest visit was of only two hours' duration. Some of his cohorts such as Goering and Ribbentrop spent a good deal more time there.

We started down the mountain and after about one mile's journey we came to a large level area where Hitler's home, or rather what was left of it, had been, for it is a complete shambles. I am told that the RAF dropped a blockbuster squarely on it, and of course the place caught fire. The main living room was an enormous room at the front of which there was a plateglass window at least 25 ft long by 10 ft high. There were not any signs of glass left in this window, of course, and there was nothing but debris in, around and all over the place. As a souvenir I picked up a piece of the marble facing of the fireplace, and I shall have it made into a paper-weight. Close by Hitler's home was a tunnel leading downwards about 55 feet to an air-raid shelter. We were told that this comprised some 25 miles of passages and rooms. This whole installation is utterly fantastic and almost unbelievable, but there it was! A complete city in the bowels of the earth where thousands of people could live for an indefinite period. For example, there was a large telephone exchange, a complete surgical ward with an operating table, surgical instruments, X-ray apparatus and so on; a complete dental establishment; kitchens of all sorts; bedrooms with rugs on the floor, pictures on the walls, and equipped with fine bathrooms. In one bedroom there was a large steel safe for personal

trinkets, jewels, etc. The American soldiers had done a fairly good job of wrecking the place before the Army caught up with them. I think it is too bad that this whole installation was not left absolutely intact to serve as an everlasting and terrible monument to the folly of a people led to perdition by a madman's lust for power.

We continued then down the mountainside back into the village of Berchtesgarden and stopped on the road alongside a very nice stream of clear water where we ate "C" rations at about 1530. We were on our way then to the headquarters of the 118th R.I. Co. at a small town named Rosenheim, where we arrived at 1915. There we were met by Lt. Silver whom I remembered very well from Arlington Hall. He took us to the Senior Officers Quarters in a little summer resort named Pruffing, about ten miles from the operations buildings. These quarters are in a very well furnished house facing a beautiful lake. There we met Lt-Col Lowdermilk, Major Flint and several others. We had supper consisting of cold cuts, dessert and coffee. There was also some beer, which I did not sample but which the others did and found rather poor. After supper we returned to the operations building for an inspection of the installation. I did not think that the installation was as nice as that of the 116th, but no doubt it is adequate for the purpose. We returned to our quarters at 2215 where we held a conference in which questions were answered by Colonel Bicher. We turned in shortly before midnight, I occupying a bed in Colonel Lowdermilk's room.

MONDAY - 23 July

Was awakened at 0645 after a good night's sleep. We had breakfast and departed for Munich at 0815. Most of this journey was made along the Autobahn, which for the most part is in excellent shape everywhere except where detours were necessitated by countless blown out bridges, viaducts, underpasses, overpasses and the like. Most of these were destroyed by the Germans in their withdrawal, but some, of course, were hit by the Allied Forces from the air. We arrived at Munich about 1000 and called upon Colonel E.F. Hammond, Signal Officer, Third Army. I remembered him as one of my students in a class which I gave at Monmouth in 1927. We had a very nice talk.

One of my interesting experiences in Munich was riding up and down a contraption which is an automatic, continuously moving series of dumbwaiters for carrying people from floor to floor, instead of the usual elevator. One might call this a "vertical escalator", but I have not the time to describe how it works. All I can say from experience in getting on and off is that it appears to be more hazardous than it really is. You think you might get out in two if you fail to step on or off at the right moment. I understand that the Germans call these things "Patemoesters" and Miss Lucas suggests that the name is derived from their resemblance to the confessional boxes. I made a complete round-trip in one of them - an amusing experience. I can imagine the fun children would have in riding them.

Here are some random thoughts and items which I find in my notebook. I think I should say at this point that we were exceptionally fortunate throughout this whole trip in having very fine weather. At no time did it rain, the sun shone all day, and there was a full moon one night.

On the roads to and from Berchtesgarden we encountered men in their very colourful Tyrolean costumes - I wanted very much to bring back one of these outfits for possible use! A fancy dress ball, for example.

All day Sunday in our travels we were stopped practically every hundred yards or so by road sentries who required us to stop and show our papers. We were somewhat irritated and mystified by this procedure until we learned a day or two later that the Theater Commander had directed that a thorough check be made of all travellers on the roads on that day. The Stars & Stripes reported that some 80,000 Germans without proper papers had been picked up in this survey. Another thing that mystified me was to come across small children on the road miles and miles from any town or village, and what they were doing there I cannot guess.

One of the sad sights is to see very old people laboriously and painfully pulling small carts with all their worldly possessions, or pulling carts with gaggets or with greens to feed their stock.

I made a note about the women who did the cooking and kept the quarters in shape for the Senior Officers at the 115th S.R.I. Co. They are young Russian women who had been carted off from their native land when the Germans were in Russia and taken westward deep into the heart of Germany. They had recently been liberated by the coming of the allied troops but are now in the unfortunate position of not wanting to go back to Russia and soon of not being able to continue at the 115th.

Another thing we noted was that in the region around Munich U.S. vehicles are permitted to pick up displaced persons going in their direction. We were hailed many times by such people "thumbing" rides but of course we could not stop to pick any of them up, since our car was full.

I noted here and there along the road, some "belly tanks" which were dropped by our planes when the reserve fuel they contained had been used up. A belly tank makes a fine small boat for little boys, who cut a hole in the top so that they can get inside; the thing floats easily on water and a small paddle serves as an oar.

While riding along I was reminded of the story which Col. Rubin told me, about the taking of the bridge in the Rhine crossing at Remagen. The orders were for the Americans to hold off until the British further up North could get ready, and the lieutenant who seized the bridge at Remagen

did so in violation of orders. Court martial proceedings were initiated but quashed after the success which the Americans had in effecting the crossing. I was also told the story of the capture of Col. Robert Allen, the details of which are too long to put in this diary, but I do wish to remember them.

Working in the fields in Germany are very, very few men. Old women, young women and children do what is necessary and they are out all day long, up until dusk. I saw no farm machinery in operation except now and again a horsedrawn small binder.

One of the sights seen in Germany I have never seen before - field after field of hops. These grow in the form of vines climbing up wires strung from poles, and forming a rather regular network.

In general the people I saw on the roads and in the cities of Germany looked quite healthy and rather well-clad. In fact they appear to be in better shape than people I saw in the French towns. The children are especially robust looking. There is a great deal of exposure to direct sunshine and everybody looks brown. Here and there we encountered men without an arm or a leg, veterans of the war.

In several of the devastated German cities, the street cars are now running, but there are thousands of battered cars standing on sidings, fit only for demolition.

To resume now with our journey, we drove down from Munich back to Busselsheim, mostly along the Autobahn which made it rather quick. Stopped at 1300 for a roadside lunch. I chose "K" rather than "C", with the hope that it would agree with me - which it did. We passed through the city of Kitzheim at 1415 and Pforzheim at 1540 - Karlsruhe at 1615 and Mannheim at 1710 where there was a terrific amount of devastation to be seen. All along the Autobahn are either well tilled fields or well kept forests. About the fields I wondered how the people who worked them knew or could tell whose plot was whose - there are no fences whatsoever and one field runs into the next. An interesting thing about the Autobahn is that every once in a while you come across a structure which looks like a small bridge over it but is merely an overpass for pedestrians. You go up a flight of steps on one side, cross over the passage-way and down a flight of steps on the other side. No doubt this is much safer, when the autobahn is heavily used, than trying to cross on foot on the highway itself.

We skirted Darmstadt at 1750 and arrived at 1800 at Grosse Geran where SIG has a very fine installation in a large cylindrical structure near the top of which is a water tank. We stopped here to make a through tour of the installation and I found it extremely interesting. W/O Hughes, who is in charge of the construction, is an exceptionally able man. We climbed to the top of the tower (about 150 feet above ground level) and had a wonderful view of the surrounding countryside.

We reached Russelsheim at 1845 and I took up my abode again in the same room that I had before. We had a good supper, followed by a roundtable "conference" in my room until almost midnight. Major William Bundy was also present, and I was glad to find him looking so well. I do not know who provided the Scotch, but there it was and it helped oil the conversation which began with Sigint and wound up with theories about God and the Universe!

TUESDAY - 24 July

After a good night's sleep despite a mosquito or two, I was up at 0700, packed my things and had breakfast at 0800.

We left Russelsheim at 1015 for Frankfurt. Major Bundy accompanied us. Frankfurt is now the headquarters of USFEAT (United States Forces European Theater) and there the Army occupies buildings of the IGF. It is interesting to note that this rather small area was entirely untouched by the bombing throughout the war, although the rest of Frankfurt is a shambles. All the IGF buildings are intact and this has given and continues to give rise to a good deal of speculation. (I've seen two references in recent newspaper accounts). It could hardly be an accident. It is of course possible that the Allied Forces had in mind that the IGF buildings would make very fine headquarters. As I've said before, most of Frankfurt with the exception of the IGF installation is a complete shambles, and we were told that in a very recent order all German adults, male and female, are required to devote their Saturday and Sunday afternoons to help clean up the debris. This, of course, is all organized work but nevertheless it will take years and years to get the mess cleaned up.

I was unfortunate in finding the people I wanted to see out of town, such as General Lanahan, Col. Brown, Col. Willis, and so on. We had a good reunion with Major Howard Nestlerode, and a fine lunch at an exceptionally well run restaurant in a nice building in back of headquarters. The waiters there were Polish displaced persons. I asked Major Nestlerode where he lived and he told me that he had some very fine quarters which had been occupied by some of the higher echelon personnel of the IGF. He said that when the Americans took over Frankfurt and the IGF buildings, these people were given six hours notice to vacate the apartments. They could take with them only the clothes they wore and personal trinkets, such as jewelry. All furniture, equipment, radios and so forth had to be left behind. Of course complete records were made of these and it is the intention to return these quarters and all their contents, to their German owners and occupants when the time comes. In some cases it was found that the Germans took advantage of the six-hour interval to carry out furniture and belongings and in these instances the time was shortened to two hours' notice.

The principal purpose of going to Frankfurt was to look around in the vicinity for possible new quarters for the installation "Barn" so we went to a nearby city called Höchst about ten miles beyond Frankfurt.

Here again there were IGF buildings intact now occupied by the US Control Commission. In one of these buildings the Signal Office has its quarters and to our astonishment, we found Germans operating and maintaining the American Telephone Exchange! Moreover in order to gain access into any of the buildings both at Höchst and at Frankfurt it is not necessary to show any pass or identification card whatever.

We paid a visit to General Betts whom I had known quite well in Washington in 1940. I tried to get in touch with Jim Bennett but found that he was out of town and was not expected back within the next ten days. On the street we ran into Captain Vol Janin, formerly at Arlington Hall, and also Major Barlow, with whom I had a good reunion.

We returned to Frankfurt where we had some very excellent icecream at the restaurant and rushed back to Russelsheim in order to be there at 1700 for a TP conference with Col. Cook which had been set up earlier in the day. However we found that Col. Cook had apparently nothing for us and no such conference was held. Col. Bicher was annoyed!

I asked Lt Col. Rubin to take me around the installation. Nothing of great interest was going on because the outfit is still in the process of getting established at this location.

We then had a nice dinner at the officers mess, after which we returned to our quarters and sat out on the porch adjoining Col. Allen's room, watching the local inhabitants until 2130 when the local curfew was imposed. It was extremely interesting to note that a few minutes before curfew the Germans were scurrying along the streets to get to their homes on time, and at exactly 2130 there were no Germans to be seen. Next to the house in which our quarters are located is the Burgomeister's office. It is to this place that the MP's bring Germans who violate the curfew. Col. Bicher and I sauntered over to that office at about 2200 to see what was going on. Two young women and several men had been picked up and the MP's took these people home but they must report the next morning to the Burgomeister for punishment. On the first offence they are fined 10 marks but subsequent offences cost very much more.

While I am on Russelsheim I should add that this morning's Stars & Stripes carries a story of interest. It was in this quiet hamlet of only a few hundred people that six of our flyers who had descended by parachute from a damaged bomber were stoned and kicked to death and buried in a common grave. Eleven Germans are now on trial for their lives for this horrible crime.

We turned in fairly early, that is at midnight.

WEDNESDAY - 25 July

Up at 0645, packed my belongings, had breakfast and we were on the way at 0800. The excellent weather continued to favor us.

We crossed the Rhine at 0530 at Oppenheim, reached Worms at 0900, which I noted had been very badly hit. We were seen in the French occupied territory where we saw many French Algerian soldiers wearing the usual colorful uniform with red fez on their heads. On the road back we passed through town after town that had been badly blown out or bombed out and I wondered how the people in these towns got their food, medical supplies and so forth because there is hardly a shop to be seen in business.

We passed through Homburg at 1100 and Saarbrücken at 1140. The latter is indeed a shambles. We got lost for a few minutes in trying to find the road to Metz and had to return to Saarbrücken where we finally got out at 1200 on the correct road and crossed the boundary into France at 1205, reaching Forbach at 1215. All along the road there were houses fairly intact but they showed the potholes of small arms fire, no doubt directed from passing vehicles as troops went by. The exigencies of life in these towns are testified to by this strange sight which I encountered: a man on a bicycle carrying on his shoulder, perched in a rather precarious position, a heavy porcelain toilet flush bowl. With no other kind of transportation available, for this chap to take a chance on transporting this very valuable and easily broken necessity of life in organized communities, speaks for itself.

Having noted the well tilled and well kept agricultural plots in Germany proper, comparison with those in France was possible and I regret to say that the German efforts looked far superior.

On the road there were two bus loads of children being repatriated into France. The buses had a large sign on each, marked "Mission de Repatriement". The children looked very happy. I saw an amusing sign on a building which read "Ice for Colding" - but on thinking it over, it's not illogical. Don't we say "Coal for Heating"? Then why not "Ice for Colding"? Another amusing sign on a bridge which had been repaired by the American Engineer Unit: "We Fixed It" followed by the unit designation. This was in contrast to the much more stately signs on many of the bridges which had been repaired by units of the organization known as COMAD, which stands for Continental Advance Base Section.

We arrived at Metz at 1320 and tried to locate the Transient Officers Mess but missed the proper turn so went on to Verdun where we were too late for lunch. We were directed to an enlisted men's mess which we found closed for repairs, and finally had to resort to a shack where the only things available were slices of white bread, peanut butter, marmalade and coffee.

Passing through Chalons at 1600 we arrived back in Paris at 1830, reporting in at the office to drop our documents. I found that Colonel Cook had laid on all the necessary arrangements for me at the Prince de Galles, where I was assigned Room 729, which was even nicer than my former 721. We had a nice dinner and spent the evening talking over affairs with Colonel Cook. Later we adjourned to the Hotel Jubilé where some of the SSD officers were found dancing. This wound up a very pleasant trip so far as I was concerned and if I have omitted any details they will come to me later - at any rate Miss Lucas must be very tired of this long drawn-out narrative!

W.F.F.

2 Sept 45